
BOOK REVIEW

Tan, Kit (editor). 1989. *Plant Taxonomy, Phytogeography and Related Subjects: The Davis and Hedge Festschrift*. Edinburgh University Press, 22 George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LF, Scotland. Distributed in North America by Columbia University Press. xxvi + 351 pp. Hardbound. Retail price: 47.50 pounds.

This volume, commemorating a seventieth and a sixtieth birthday respectively, is one of those delightful books with which it must be so pleasant to have been associated, whether as editor or author. Peter Davis and Ian Hedge are, to quote the forward, "... two of the outstanding Edinburgh botanists of the latter half of this century." The contributors to the festschrift are from 25 institutes in 15 countries, and their contributions highlight current taxonomic problems, especially in the Mediterranean and southwest Asian regions so beloved by Davis and Hedge.

The 26-page preface contains brief biographical sketches, photographs, and extensive lists of the publications of the two celebrated botanists. The actual papers in this volume are a mixed bag and should include something of interest to almost everyone. New taxa of *Filago* and *Cichorium* (Compositae), *Bupleurum* and *Stoibrax* (Umbelliferae), *Grimmia* (Musci), *Veronica* (Scrophulariaceae), *Astragalus* (Leguminosae-Papilionoideae), *Iris* (Iridaceae), *Galium* (Rubiaceae), *Piptatherum* and *Stipa* (Gramineae), and *Peristylus* (Orchidaceae) are described. There are also revisions of *Monochoria* and parts of *Iris* and *Olea*.

The phytogeography papers are representative of the old school of geography; those biologists interested in vicariance biogeography will look in vain. One-seventh of the nearly 5,000 species of vascular plants in Greece are endemic. Arne Strid gives examples of these in relation to phytogeography and conservation. Another paper discusses floristic links and endemism in the Armenian highlands.

Rupert Barneby discusses some problems and consequences of typification in *Mimosa* in his usual

eloquent fashion. A second paper by Barneby describes the identification of an object dug from the site of a former English bakery as a mesocarp of a menispermaceous genus that probably arrived on the site as a foreign body in a sack of Brazil nuts.

Two recurrent problems also reappear in the volume. The systematic position of *Rhabdodendron* is discussed in light of new and extensive embryological information. Although authors Tobe and Raven would place the genus in the Rosiflorae (but not in Dahlgren's Rosales), the mostly plesiomorphic embryological characters allow the actual placement of the genus to remain enigmatic. Of interest to a wider audience of botanists will be the chapter by Gertrud Dahlgren entitled "The Last Dahlgrenogram, System of Classification of the Dicotyledons." Published by his widow, this modified bubble diagram represents Rolf Dahlgren's last work on this topic before his fatal traffic accident in February 1987. A list of families and orders, as well as a discussion of the changes between this and the 1980 scheme, is given. Interestingly, the endings '-florae' for superorders have now been changed to '-anae'.

Finally, two light but enjoyable papers round out the volume. *Plantsmen & Pottery* discusses, among other things, Peter Davis's interest in the Scottish pottery known as Wemyss ware, slotting him among former and living biologists with close ceramic ties. The difficulties met on ten botanical expeditions to Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan over a period of 40 years are described in almost 50 pages by K. H. Rechinger. Air-travel is noticeable by its absence, as are the political problems and fighting, which now prohibit most travel to these areas. Almost 60,000 numbers were collected despite the perils and problems encountered. I recommend this account of recent travel in these areas, which have now largely changed forever.

Altogether, this is a most interesting and worthwhile compilation of papers, and it belongs on the shelves of most botanical libraries.—P. Mick Richardson, *Missouri Botanical Garden, P.O. Box 299, St. Louis, Missouri 63166, U.S.A.*